

The Seattle Times



# LOCAL NEWS

EASTSIDE EDITION

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## Impact of I-405 widening assessed

**EASTSIDE**

**State doesn't anticipate  
major environmental  
issues standing in way  
of \$1 billion project**

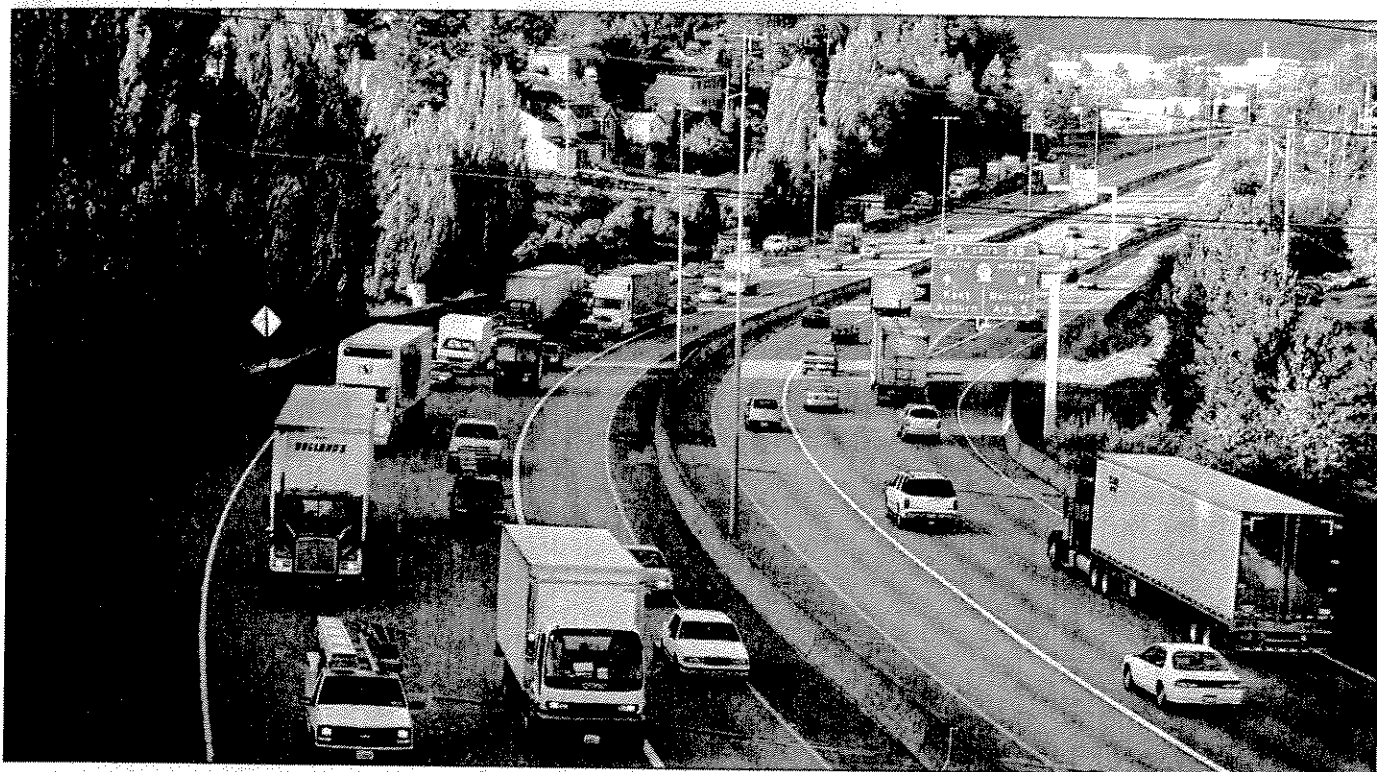
**BY KAREN GAUDETTE**  
*Seattle Times Eastside bureau*

If and when the state finds \$1 billion to widen eight miles of Interstate 405 between Renton and Bellevue, it doesn't anticipate any major environmental issues will stand in its way.

Today the state Department of Transportation is releasing its assessment of how adding two lanes in each direction of I-405 between Highway 169 and the I-90 interchange could affect homes, businesses, wildlife, water and land alongside the Eastside's major north-south artery.

Among the impacts cited are noise, detours and other inconveniences during construction, a realignment of parts of the Lake Washington Trail and the need to buy about 44 acres of land to make way for the wider freeway, including the sites of Denny's and McDonald's restaurants near Exit 7 in Renton.

Please see > I-405, B3



STEVE RINGMAN / THE SEATTLE TIMES

The state Department of Transportation is releasing its assessment of how adding two lanes in each direction of I-405 between Highway 169 and the I-90 interchange could affect homes, businesses, wildlife, water and land.

## < I-405

FROM B1

### STATE ASSESSES ADDING 2 LANES IN EACH DIRECTION OF I-405

#### No major environmental issues expected to arise

The state would ease some of those impacts by adding noise walls, creating new wetlands to replace those it will disturb, improving fish habitat along many of the rivers and creeks along the route, and collecting and treating runoff from the highway to improve water quality.

The public has until April 14 to comment. With the assessment nearly complete, the \$1 billion project can quickly move forward when funding eventually comes, said Kim Henry, a chief engineer.

"If and when funding comes through, we're really ready to step forward with design and engineering," Henry said.

The Renton-to-Bellevue project also would rebuild eight interchanges, build stormwater-management facilities and add a freeway ramp at North Eighth

#### Public comment sought

TODAY THE STATE RELEASES its assessment of how widening Interstate 405 from Highway 169 in Renton to Interstate 90 in Bellevue could affect the environment and how it would ease those impacts. Copies are available at area libraries and online at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/i405/RentontoBellevue>. Comments must be received or postmarked by April 14 and should be sent to Allison Ray, Washington State Department of Transportation, 600 108th Avenue N.E., Ste. 405 Bellevue, WA 98004 or e-mail [allison.ray@i405.wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:allison.ray@i405.wsdot.wa.gov). A public hearing is scheduled from 4 to 7 p.m. March 22 at the Renton Senior Activity Center, 211 Burnett Ave. N. in Renton.

Street in Renton for buses and car pools that would connect them to the freeway's car-pool lanes. Construction would take about five years, Henry said.

The Renton-to-Bellevue project is one of dozens planned for the interstate, which stretches from Renton to Bothell

along Lake Washington and has grown increasingly congested.

A 5-cent gas-tax increase in 2003 and a gradual 9-cent increase that began last year are footing the bill for several projects set to begin construction in coming years. Those include a new northbound lane between Northeast 70th Street and Northeast 124th Street in Kirkland and a new southbound lane from Highway 522 nearly to Highway 520.

Sound Transit is teaming up with the state and cities along I-405 on several mass-transit projects, including a new freeway bus station and special freeway ramp for buses and car pools in Kirkland's Totem Lake neighborhood and a new bridge over the freeway at Northeast 128th Street in Kirkland.

The state hopes the Renton-to-Bellevue project will be included in a package of regional highway improvements that could go before voters in King, Pierce and Snohomish counties in 2007. That package also could include money to replace Seattle's Alaskan Way Viaduct and the 520 Floating Bridge.

The state says both structures are aging and vulnerable to earthquakes. Officials say all three projects are vital to the region's economy.

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